

## INFORMATION REGARDING ACCESS TO RECREATIONAL AREAS AS A RESULT OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

With the federal shutdown continuing, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is receiving increased customer inquiries from recreational users, hunters, and fishermen regarding the status of federal properties. Many customers have had difficulty finding answers to their questions due to the furloughed federal employees, and have alternatively contacted state agencies for assistance. The WDNR has had a similar challenge in obtaining concrete information regarding the federal shutdown, but has assembled the following responses based on information from federal agency websites and information provided limited available federal staff. **It is important to note that questions regarding the shutdown (including its scope or duration) should be directed to the appropriate federal authorities, as the State of Wisconsin has not initiated any recreational closures in response to federal appropriations.**

Many field wardens and customer service staff have requested assistance with disseminating information in response to public inquiries; the points below have been assembled from the limited available information on the shutdown. This information is being provided as a resource for Wisconsin citizens in the absence of federal guidance, and any subsequent official releases from federal agencies should appropriately supersede these responses. If such a release comes out, we will post that on our website.

Until further notice, the following information should be used as a guide to answer any questions regarding access to various recreational sites.

### **Specific Use Areas:**

#### **I. Mississippi River**

Although the US Department of the Interior has closed federal access points, federal river properties, and the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, citizens that gain legal access to the river (via open launches) are permitted to use the Mississippi River waters and state-owned properties for legal recreational activities (boating, fishing, hunting, etc.) and other lawful activities incident to navigation. According to available online sources, federally controlled lands, including certain islands in the river, will remain closed until opened by federal authorities. For information about the federal shutdown's impact on the US Fish and Wildlife Service, citizens are encouraged to review the

attached links, and the USFWS website at <http://www.doi.gov/index.cfm> .

US Fish and Wildlife Service Contingency Plan Factsheet

<http://www.doi.gov/shutdown/fy2014/upload/FWS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

US Fish and Wildlife Service Contingency Plan FAQs

<http://www.doi.gov/shutdown/fy2014/upload/FWS-FAQ.pdf>

US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service Contingency Plan

<http://www.doi.gov/shutdown/fy2014/upload/FWS-Final-Contingency-Plan.pdf>

## **II. Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forests**

According to the US Forest Service Special Agent in Charge Mary King at 6:07PM today the following information was provided:

- All Forest Service Recreation Campgrounds will be closed within the next 24 to 48 hours due to the government shutdown.
- Concessionaire Campground Permittees will be receiving notification that their permits are being suspended and they will need to prepare for an orderly shutdown within the next 24 to 48 hours (discretion will be allowed).
- Hunting access will be allowed but all facilities will be closed and no service available due to all non-exempted employees being furloughed

Mary advised the situation is constantly changing so visitors should plan to stay flexible.

US Department of Agriculture Forest Service Contingency Plan

<http://www.usda.gov/documents/usda-fs-shutdown-plan.pdf>

## **III. National Parks/Campgrounds**

The National Park Service has closed access to national parks, and notified campground users to exit all national campgrounds. These facilities will remain closed until further notice by federal authorities.

National Parks Service Contingency Plan Factsheet

<http://www.doi.gov/shutdown/fy2014/upload/NPS-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

National Parks Service Contingency Plan FAQs

<http://www.doi.gov/shutdown/fy2014/upload/NPS-FAQ.pdf>

US Department of the Interior National Parks Service Contingency Plan

<http://www.doi.gov/shutdown/fy2014/upload/NPS-contingency-plan.pdf>

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